INDESTRUCTIBLE HULK SPECIAL

THE ARMS OF THE OCTOPUS
PART 2 OF 3

MARVEL

001

VISTING NEW YORK CITY, THE TIME-DISPLACED ORIGINAL XMEN FOUND THEMSELVES IN A CROWDED AND UNFAMILIAR CITY.

ESCAPING TO THE PARK, BEAST BECAME ENAMORED WITH A YOUNG WOMAN, WHO HAPPENED TO WORK WITH HIS FORMER PROFESSOR, DR. JUDE.

UPON VISITING HIS LAB, BEAST WAS ATTACKED BY A STRANGE, GAMMA-IRRADIATED VISITOR: A YOUNG DOCTOR OCTOPUS.

THE YOUNG X-MEN DEFEATED HIM WITH THE HELP OF THE SUPERIIOR SPIDER-MAN, YET THEY WERE FACED WITH UNANSWERED QUESTIONS.

WHERE DID THIS MAN COME FROM? AND IS HE REALLY DOCTOR OCTOPUS?

FOR A FRIEND WHOSE WORK HAS COME TO TRIUMPH

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LATER THEY'LL TELL ME I DESTROYED AN ENTIRE UNDERGROUND NEST OF MODERATELY INTELLIGENT SUPER-TARANTULAS.

AW MAN. THIS IS A DISASTER.

HEY, BE CAREFUL. THIS IS ***DELICATE STUFF*** HERE. WE CAN'T JUST DROP IT TO THE DESERT FLOOR.

I CAN ***SEE*** HIM, THOUGH. THAT MEANS HE CAN SEE ***US.***

THEY ALWAYS TELL ME. SOMETIMES THEY EVEN ***SHOW*** ME, IF THERE'S FOOTAGE. THAT'S THE WORST. WHEN I CAN ***SEE*** IT.

HE'S ***SUPPOSED*** TO SEE US. IF THIS ISN'T IN HIS LINE OF SIGHT IT DOESN'T ***WORK.***

SOMETIMES IT'S DIFFICULT FOR ME TO REMEMBER WHAT I DO WHEN I'M THE HULK.

I TRY TO TAKE COMFORT IN THE THOUGHT THAT THE ***HULK*** CAN'T REALLY REMEMBER WHAT I DO WHEN I'M ***NOT*** HIM. BUT OF COURSE I HAVE NO WAY TO BE SURE OF THAT.

CERTAINLY IF HE ***CAN*** REMEMBER, THERE'S NO WAY HE COULD ***UNDERSTAND.***

WHO KNOWS? MAYBE THAT JUST MAKES HIM ***ANGRIER.***

OH, MAN, HE ***IS*** CLOSE. OKAY, LET'S MOVE, PEOPLE! LET'S GO!

IT'S TAKEN ME A LONG TIME TO ACCEPT THE FACT THAT THE HULK IS ***ME,*** AND NOT SOME OTHER PERSON.

IT'S STILL HARD, EVEN AFTER ALL THESE YEARS.

THE BLACKOUTS. THE HAZY, MUDDLED MEMORIES OF ANGER AND VIOLENCE. THE SUSPICION--THE ***CERTAINTY***--THAT SOMETHING TERRIBLE HAPPENED, THOUGH I DON'T KNOW ***WHAT.***

DEPLOY! DEPLOY!

AND AFTERWARD, PIECING IT TOGETHER, DISCOVERING WHAT HAPPENED, WHAT I ***DID.***

MRRPH?

KA WHAM

EVERYTHING IS AN AWFUL ***REVELATION.***

EVEN THINGS THAT MIGHT OTHERWISE BE PLEASANT.

ONE TIME, SOMEONE PLAYED ME A RECORDING OF THE HULK ***LAUGHING.***

HAHAHA!

IT WAS TERRIFYING.

MPH...SO THE PUPPIES WORKED.

YES, IT SEEMS YOU WERE RIGHT. DESPITE WHAT OUR BEST BEHAVIORISTS SAID. THIS WAS A *GAMBLE.*

MY NAME IS DR. ROBERT BRUCE BANNER.

FIONA! OH, BUNNY, YOU'RE OKAY!

I WORK FOR S.H.I.E.L.D.

DUE RESPECT, AGENT, BUT NONE OF YOUR BEHAVIORAL SCIENTISTS ARE EVER GOING TO UNDERSTAND THE HULK BETTER THAN ME.

AND THE HULK LOVES *PUPPIES.*

WAIT...YOU GUYS USED YOUR *OWN* DOGS FOR THIS?

WELL WHERE THE HELL *ELSE* DO YOU THINK WE'RE GOING TO GET A DOZEN PUPPIES ON NO NOTICE?

COME ON, DR. BANNER. WE'RE WHEELS UP IN 30 SECONDS. YOU'RE NEEDED ELSEWHERE.

AND THEY DO NOT LIKE ME VERY MUCH.

PLEASE STEP BACK, DR. BANNER. THIS AIRCRAFT WILL ROLL DURING TURBULENCE AND WE'D RATHER YOU NOT GET... STARTLED.

NOT THAT I CAN *BLAME* THEM.

I'M SURE THESE PEOPLE HAVE DELIVERED PLENTY OF BOMBS... BUT USUALLY NOT ONE WHO *TALKS BACK* AND COULD *GO OFF* AT ANY MINUTE.

SO YOU HAVE ME GOING OUT AGAIN, RIGHT AWAY? DO YOU HAVE ANOTHER ONE OF THOSE PUPPY-BOMBS ARMED?

NO SIR, DR. BANNER. THEY DON'T NEED THE BIG GUY FOR THIS ONE.

"THEY NEED THE BIG *BRAIN.*"

EMPIRE STATE UNIVERSITY

DR. BANNER. THANK YOU FOR COMING.

SPIDER-MAN. I WAS ABLE TO READ YOUR FINDINGS ON THE FLIGHT OVER. IT'S BRILLIANT WORK... UNTIL IT STOPS MAKING SENSE.

I AGREE WITH YOU, DR. BANNER. SPIDER-MAN'S GRASP OF THIS SCIENCE IS INCREDIBLE. BUT I FEAR THAT EVEN WITH HIS HELP, I CAN'T GET THESE NUMBERS TO COME OUT RIGHT.

DR. JUDE! IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME! ARE THESE YOUR NEW FACILITIES?

YES... SUCH AS THEY ARE...

HEY. WHY IS DR. JUDE SWEATING SO MUCH WHILE HE'S TALKING TO THAT NEW DOCTOR?

COULD BE BECAUSE THAT'S DR. BRUCE BANNER, AND HE CHANGES INTO AN UNSTOPPABLE GREEN MONSTER WHEN HE GETS ANGRY.

OH.

WAIT. HE *WHAT?*

...REALLY IS WONDERFUL TO SEE YOU AGAIN. AND THESE MUST BE YOUR STUDENTS?

WAIT... HANG ON. I...

WHAT AM I..?

THERE'S MUCH WE NEED TO EXPLAIN TO YOU, DR. BANNER.

IN MY LIFETIME, I'VE SEEN MEN AND WOMEN-- *HUNDREDS* OF THEM-- DO IMPOSSIBLE THINGS.

I'VE DISCOVERED HIDDEN SOCIETIES UNDERGROUND, AT THE SOUTH POLE, AND ON THE EARTH'S MOON. I'VE MET ALIENS. I'VE TRAVELED THROUGH TIME. I'VE BEEN TO MYSTICAL DIMENSIONS.

I NEARLY CONQUERED ANOTHER *PLANET*. I'VE FOUGHT WITH BEINGS SO POWERFUL THEY COULD PUT OUT THE SUN. I'VE TRADED PUNCHES WITH *GODS*.

AND, OF COURSE, A BOMB I DESIGNED BLEW UP IN MY FACE AND NOW I CHANGE INTO A GIANT MONSTER WHOSE STRENGTH IS *INCALCULABLE*.

SO. YOU KIDS ARE XAVIER'S ORIGINAL TEENAGE STUDENTS FROM THE PAST, BROUGHT FORWARD IN TIME TO THE PRESENT. AND YOU BELIEVE THAT OTTO OCTAVIUS IN THERE--WHO SHOULD BE DEAD AND LOOKS TOO YOUNG ANYWAY-- MIGHT SOMEHOW HAVE FOLLOWED YOU THROUGH.

YES.

I DON'T BELIEVE THAT.

HM. WELL...

SOUNDS PLAUSIBLE.

I DO APPRECIATE THE CALL, GENTLEMEN, BUT WHY ARE WE TRYING TO CRACK THIS MYSTERY IN A UNIVERSITY'S UNDER-EQUIPPED SUBBASEMENT WHEN I HAVE ALL OF S.H.I.E.L.D.'S LABORATORIES AT MY DISPOSAL?

WITH RESPECT, DR. BANNER, WE'D RATHER S.H.I.E.L.D. NOT BECOME AWARE OF THE CURRENT... "SITUATION" WITH MYSELF AND MY CLASSMATES. IF THE MAN IN THERE IS SOMEHOW RELATED TO OUR JOURNEY THROUGH TIME, WE'D LIKE TO HANDLE IT OURSELVES.

AND I WOULD LIKE TO REMAIN A PART OF THIS, WITHOUT HAVING TO DEAL WITH BUREAUCRATIC INTERFERENCE.

LOTS OF *AGENDAS* HERE.

BUT...

IT'S THE *SMELL.* THE SMELL OF DAMP, AND THE SMELL OF *PAPER.* MODERN LABS HARDLY HAVE ANY PAPER ANYMORE.

IT TAKES ME BACK TO *GRAD SCHOOL.* CRUMMY EQUIPMENT. NO OVERSIGHT. JUST LONG NIGHTS AND DEDICATED COLLEAGUES.

I ♥ SCIENCE

LET'S GET STARTED.

JUST THE *WORK.*

IS THIS A SPECTROMETER? IT LOOKS LIKE IT'S 20 YEARS OLD.

IT IS. AND IT HASN'T WORKED IN *10.*

THEN WE BETTER *FIX* IT.

THE WORK I WAS *BORN* FOR.

THIS HAIR SAMPLE IS WEIRDLY SCORCHED.

I ALREADY RAN AN ENZYME TEST ON IT, WITH A SOLUTION I MANAGED TO GIN UP FROM SOME OF THE COOLANTS THAT ARE LEAKING EVERYWHERE AROUND THIS PLACE.

THIS YOUNG HENRY MCCOY IS ***BRILLIANT.*** I WAS NOWHERE ***NEAR*** HIS LEVEL OF EXPERTISE AT HIS AGE.

WE DID THE SAME TEST ON SOME TEETH I KNOCKED LOOSE. SEEM TO BE HUMAN BUT HIGHLY IRRADIATED.

MAKES SENSE. TEETH AND BONES SOAK UP THE MOST RADIATION IN THE HUMAN BODY.

IF HE EVEN ***IS*** HUMAN, WHICH I HIGHLY DOUBT. IF ONLY BECAUSE, IF HE ***WAS,*** HE SHOULD BE ***DEAD*** FROM THESE GAMMA RAYS.

SPIDER-MAN IS INCREDIBLY IMPRESSIVE AS WELL. I WAS UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT HE WAS SOMETHING OF A SCIENTIST BUT THE DEPTH OF HIS KNOWLEDGE IS ***ASTOUNDING.***

EVEN IF HE ***IS*** A LITTLE ARROGANT.

GAMMA EXPOSURE DOESN'T ***ALWAYS*** KILL. AND IF HE WERE SOME SORT OF MACHINE...WELL, THE WORK IS ***AMAZING.*** YOU'D NEED SOMEONE ON THE ORDER OF ***HANK PYM*** COULD TO GET THIS KIND OF REPLICATION.

REALLY? ***THAT*** SOPHISTICATED?

THE ***MACHINESMITH*** COULD HAVE DONE THIS. OR IT COULD BE A STOLEN ***LIFE MODEL DECOY.***

OF ***OTTO OCTAVIOUS?*** AND WHAT MOTIVE COULD THE ***MACHINESMITH*** HAVE?

DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT?

NOT A CLUE.

IT'S WORTH MENTIONING THAT JEAN USED TELEPATHY TO READ OCTAVIOUS'S MIND AND FOUND WHAT SEEMED TO BE LEGITIMATE EMOTIONS AND IMPULSES.

THERE WERE POSITRONIC DOUBLE-STATE QUANTUM AI SYSTEMS ***10 YEARS*** AGO THAT COULD FOOL A NOVICE TELEPATH.

THEY SAID YOUR NAME, JEAN. I HEARD THEM SAY YOUR NAME. THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT US.

YEAH. I'M NOT LISTENING.

GUYS. I'M ***SUPER*** BORED.

THERE'S GOTTA BE ***SOMETHING*** TO DO AROUND HERE WHILE THE EGGHEADS WORK, RIGHT?

DR. JUDE, HOWEVER, IS THE BIGGEST SURPRISE. WHEN I LEFT EMPIRE STATE, THE MAN WAS A ***TOWERING FIGURE*** IN GAMMA RESEARCH. I KNOW I'VE BEEN OUT OF THE ACADEMIC GOSSIP CIRCLES FOR A WHILE, BUT HE SHOULD BE CHAIRING THE PHYSICS DEPARTMENT, NOT SHARING LAB-SPACE WITH SEWER RATS.

I WONDER WHAT HAPPENED THERE?

SWALLOW IT. *SWALLOW* IT, YOU REVOLTING *HOMUNCULOUS!* WHEN I FIND THE *SWINE* THAT *DARED* TO *HUMILIATE* ME LIKE THIS I'LL--

WOW. SPIDER-MAN IS REALLY, LIKE... *OFFENDED* BY THIS GUY, HUH?

OBVIOUSLY THEY HAVE A LOT OF HISTORY TOGETHER. IT'S THAT STRANGE WAY THAT HATE IS JUST ANOTHER KIND OF *LOVE.*

SPEAKING OF WHICH...ARE YOU SEEING ANYBODY RIGHT NOW?

I...AH... WELL...

OH. MY. THESE DEVICES ARE JUST *AMAZING* AREN'T THEY? ALL THAT MUSIC IN THE PALM OF MY HAND. IT REMINDS ME OF AN IDEA I HAD ONCE FOR A HEART-RATE MONITOR THAT ALSO CONVERTED KINETIC ENERGY INTO SYMPHONIES AS YOU JOGGED...

DO YOU LISTEN TO MUCH MUSIC? WHO'S YOUR FAVORITE ARTIST RIGHT NOW?

RIGHT *NOW?* YOU MEAN...

CONTEMPORARY? I GUESS I'D HAVE TO SAY, UH...ROD... STEWART?

ROD *STEWART?*

RRRRAAAAR!

OH, THANK HEAVENS.

CLEARLY SOME KIND OF BATTLE GOING ON UP THERE. DR. BANNER, YOU MIGHT WANT TO KEEP BACK.

NO. YOU'RE GOING TO NEED ME FOR THIS. I THINK I RECOGNIZE THAT ROAR.

THAT VOICE IS UNMISTAKABLE. LIKE BONES GRINDING UNDER THE TREAD OF A *TANK*.

YOU DO?

YES. AND I'M SORRY, DR. MCCOY. BUT I THINK YOU AND YOUR CLASSMATES MIGHT HAVE, INDEED, CREATED SOME SORT OF TEMPORAL ANOMALY.

A PITY, REALLY.

9.

BOOM

CRRRUUUMBLE

BECAUSE THAT'S EMIL BLONSKY. THE *ABOMINATION*.

AND HE *DIED* SOME TIME AGO.

I REALLY LET MYSELF BELIEVE I'D BE ABLE TO SOLVE THIS PROBLEM WITH *BRAINS* ALONE.

WE CAME UP FOR SOME SUNSHINE AND SAW KIDS RUNNING THROUGH THE *QUAD.* *NO IDEA* WHERE HE CAME FROM.

I KNOW WHERE HE CAME FROM. THE *BAD* OLD DAYS.

SPIDER-MAN, GET THE X-KIDS *OUT* OF HERE. THERE'S NOTHING THEY CAN DO.

HEY... WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!

GETTING INTO *CHARACTER.*

IF I'M NOT CALMING DOWN AFTER EVERYTHING'S OVER, TELL JEAN TO MAKE ME THINK OF *PUPPIES.*

REMEMBER...

NO!!

PUPPIES!

DR. BANNER IS JUST *GONE.* HIS MIND...IT'S LIKE A *CHILD.* HE JUST WANTS TO BE *LEFT ALONE* AND HE'S SO *ANGRY...*

BOOM

GAH!

MY BEAM IS HAVING ABSOLUTELY *NO* EFFECT.

WE'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE.

WE CAN'T JUST *LEAVE--*

THE HULK IS AN *AVENGER*, AND HE WORKS FOR S.H.I.E.L.D. HE CAN TAKE CARE OF *HIMSELF*. WHAT WE NEED TO DO IS GET TO YOUR *TIME MACHINE*.

AS IMPOSSIBLE AS IT SEEMED 20 MINUTES AGO...I'M NOW OPEN TO THE POSSIBILITY THIS IS TIME-TRAVEL RELATED. AND THOUGH WE'RE OUTCLASSED *HERE*, WE CAN POTENTIALLY DO SOME GOOD AT THE *OTHER END* AND MAKE SURE NOTHING ELSE COMES *THROUGH*.

I CONCUR.

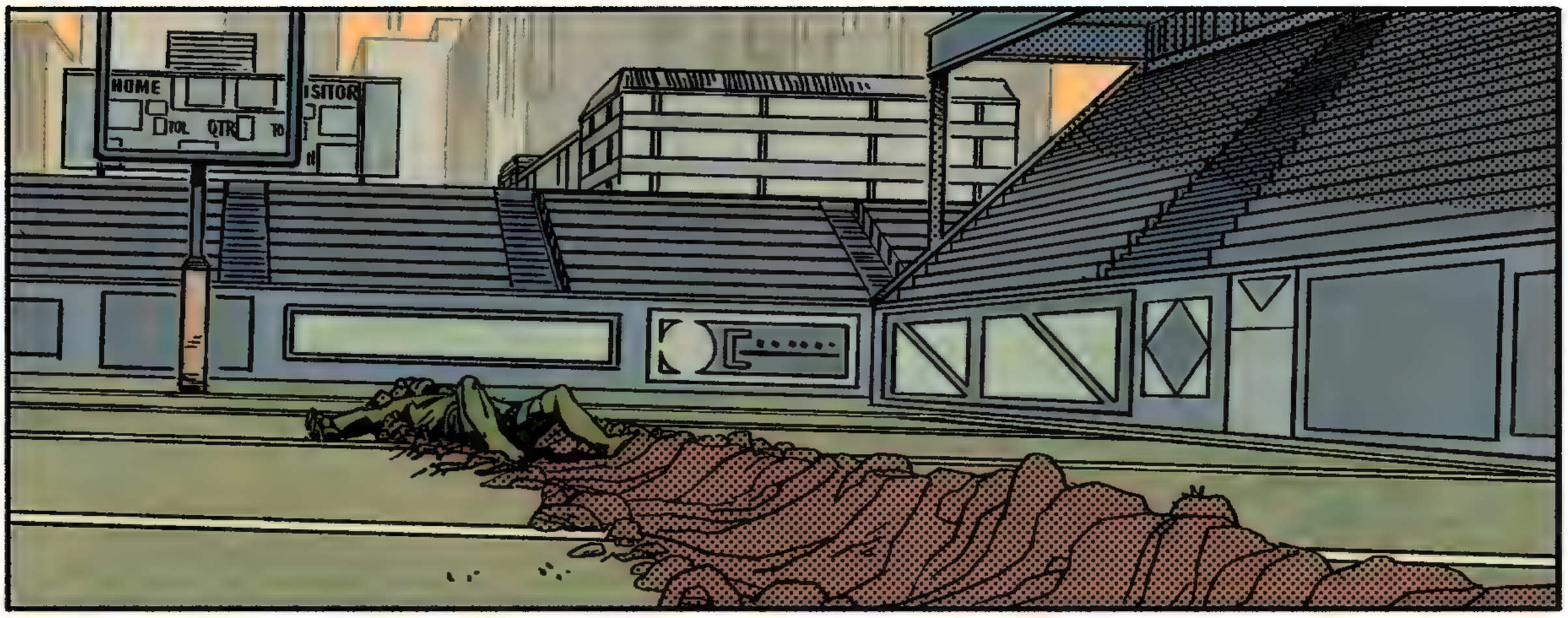
YEAH. YEAH, ME TOO. I CONCUR WE GET OUT OF HERE *TOO*. FOR *SCIENCE* OR WHATEVER.

MOLLY!

THERE'S NO TIME!

THAT'S YOUR *STUDENT!* WE DON'T LEAVE PEOPLE *BEHIND*.

NO, HE'S RIGHT. I'LL GO AFTER MOLLY, YOU GUYS HAVE TO *GO*. FIND ME--THE *OLDER* ME. HE'LL BE ABLE TO SORT THIS OUT. I'LL BE *FINE*.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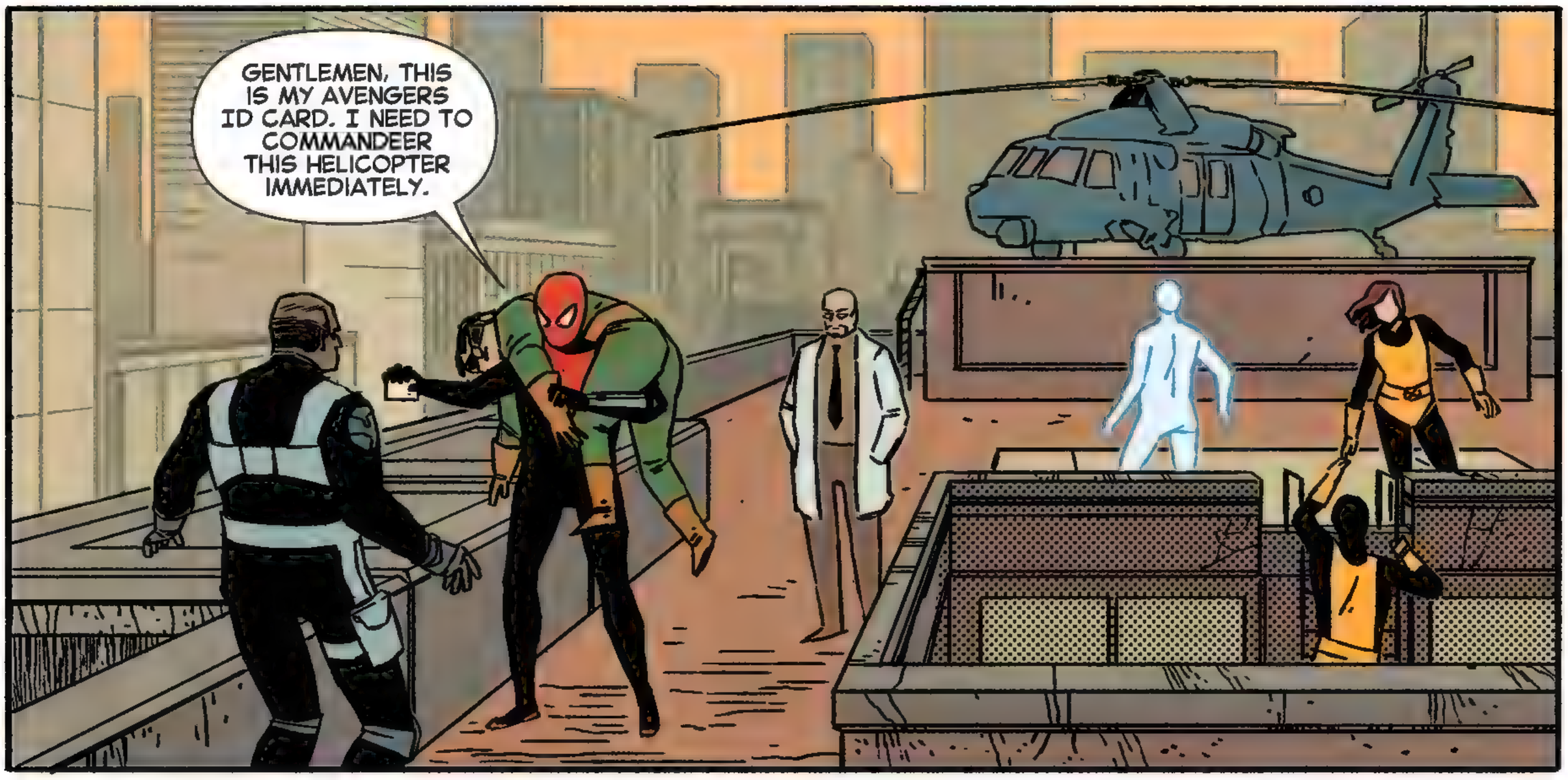
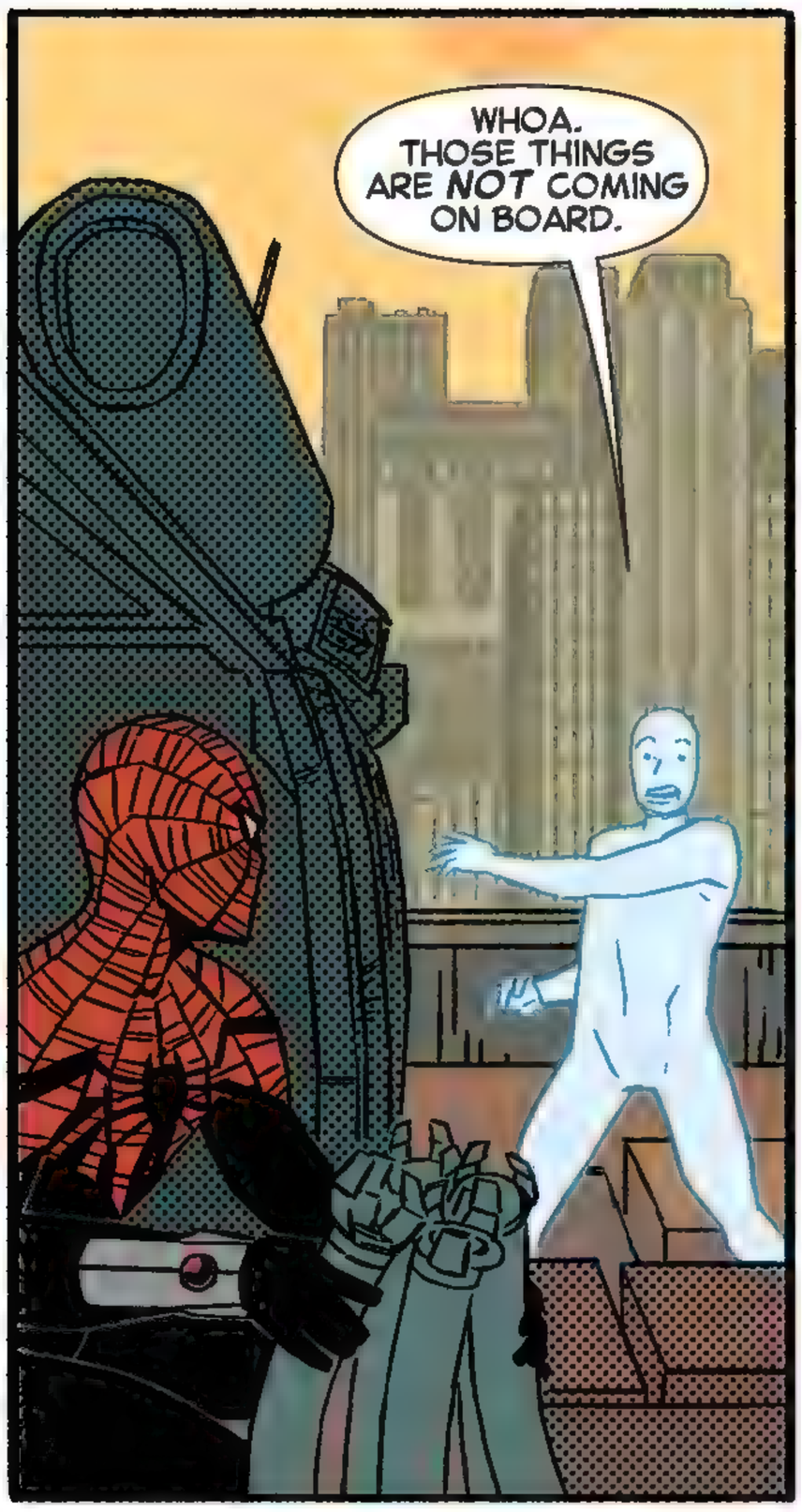
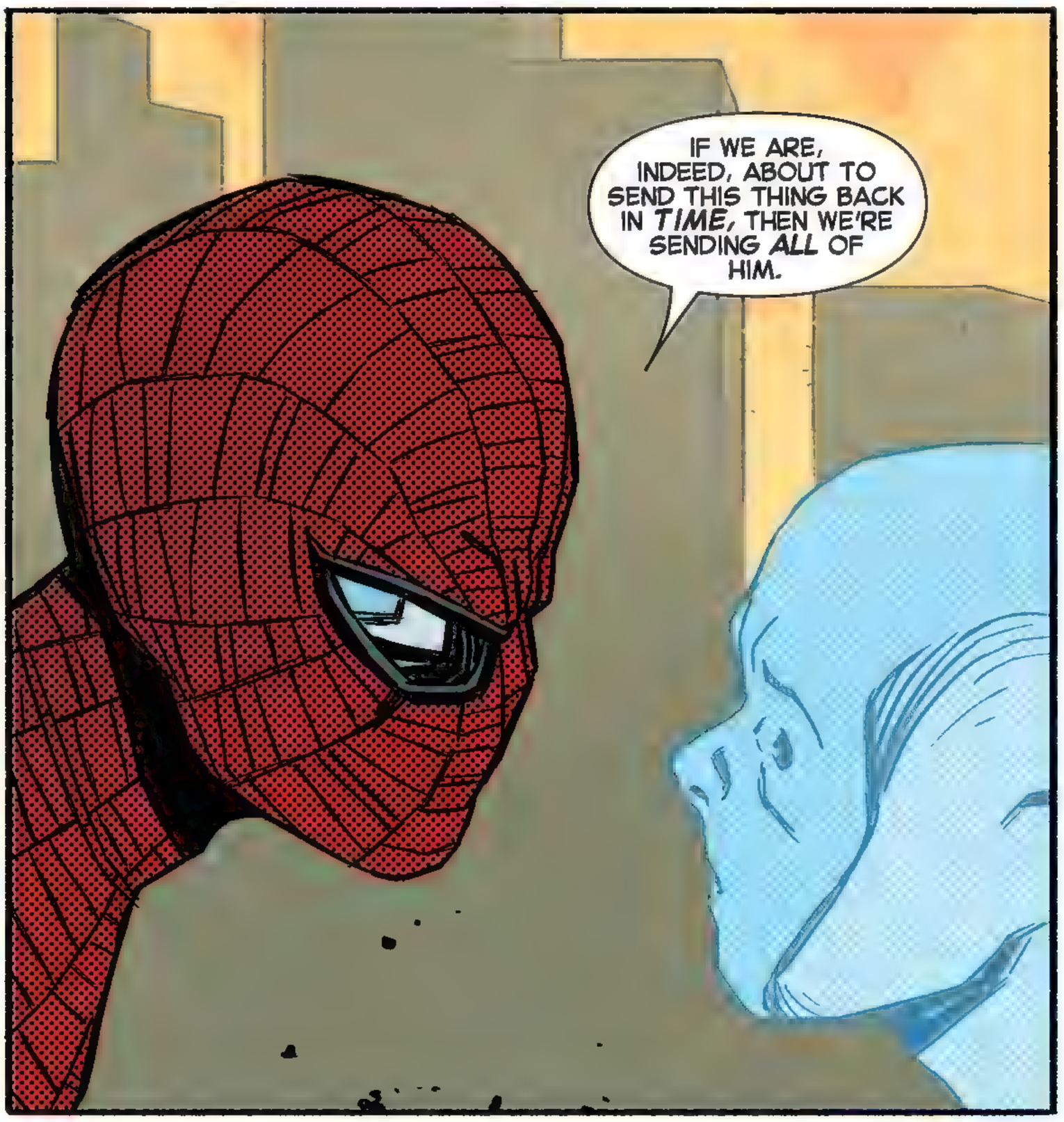

GENTLEMEN, THIS IS MY AVENGERS ID CARD. I NEED TO COMMANDEER THIS HELICOPTER IMMEDIATELY.


WHOA. THOSE THINGS ARE NOT COMING ON BOARD.


IF WE ARE, INDEED, ABOUT TO SEND THIS THING BACK IN TIME, THEN WE'RE SENDING ALL OF HIM.

HOLY CRAP.

FLY, SPIDER-MAN! WAIT, THAT SOUNDS WEIRD.

KA-TANG

TOOM

HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA

MOLLY?! MOLLY, ARE YOU OKAY?

HENRY? IS THAT YOU?

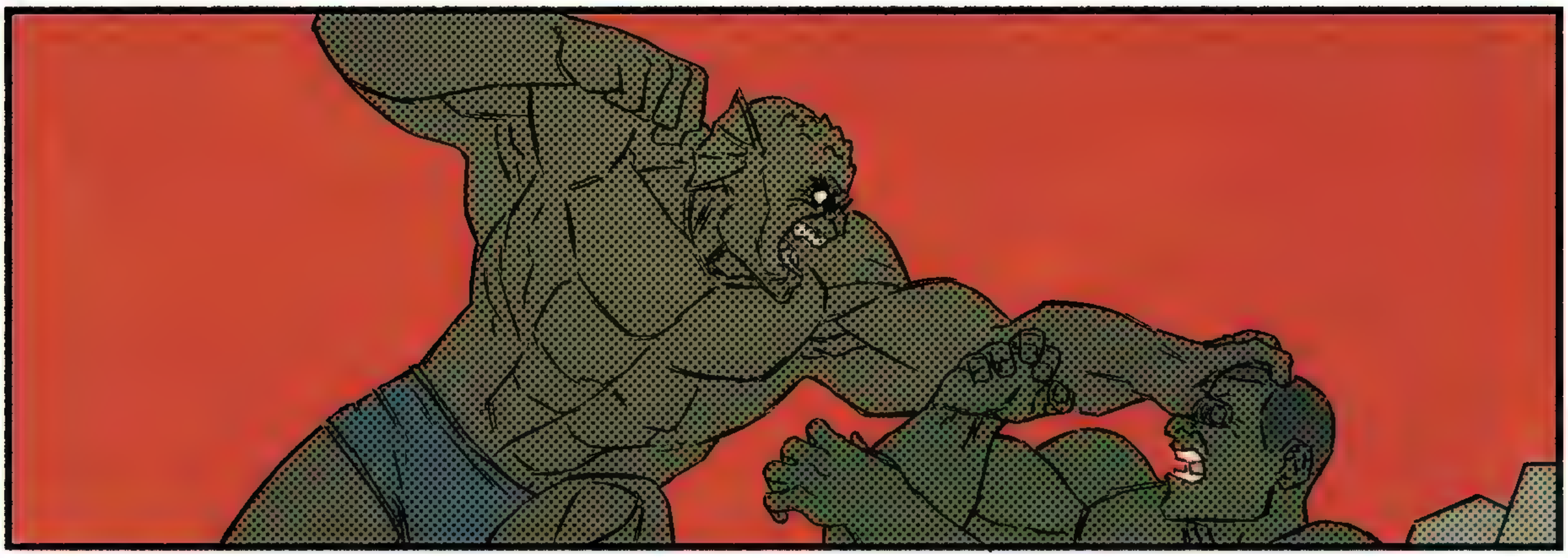
COME DOWN HERE QUICK! THIS LOOKS BAD!

IF ANY WOUNDS ARE BLEEDING BRIGHT RED, AND PULSING, APPLY *DIRECT* PRESSURE. FEEL YOUR *ABDOMEN*. IF ANY PARTS HURT AND FEEL *HARD* UNDER YOUR FINGERS, THAT'S *INTERNAL BLEEDING*, AND--

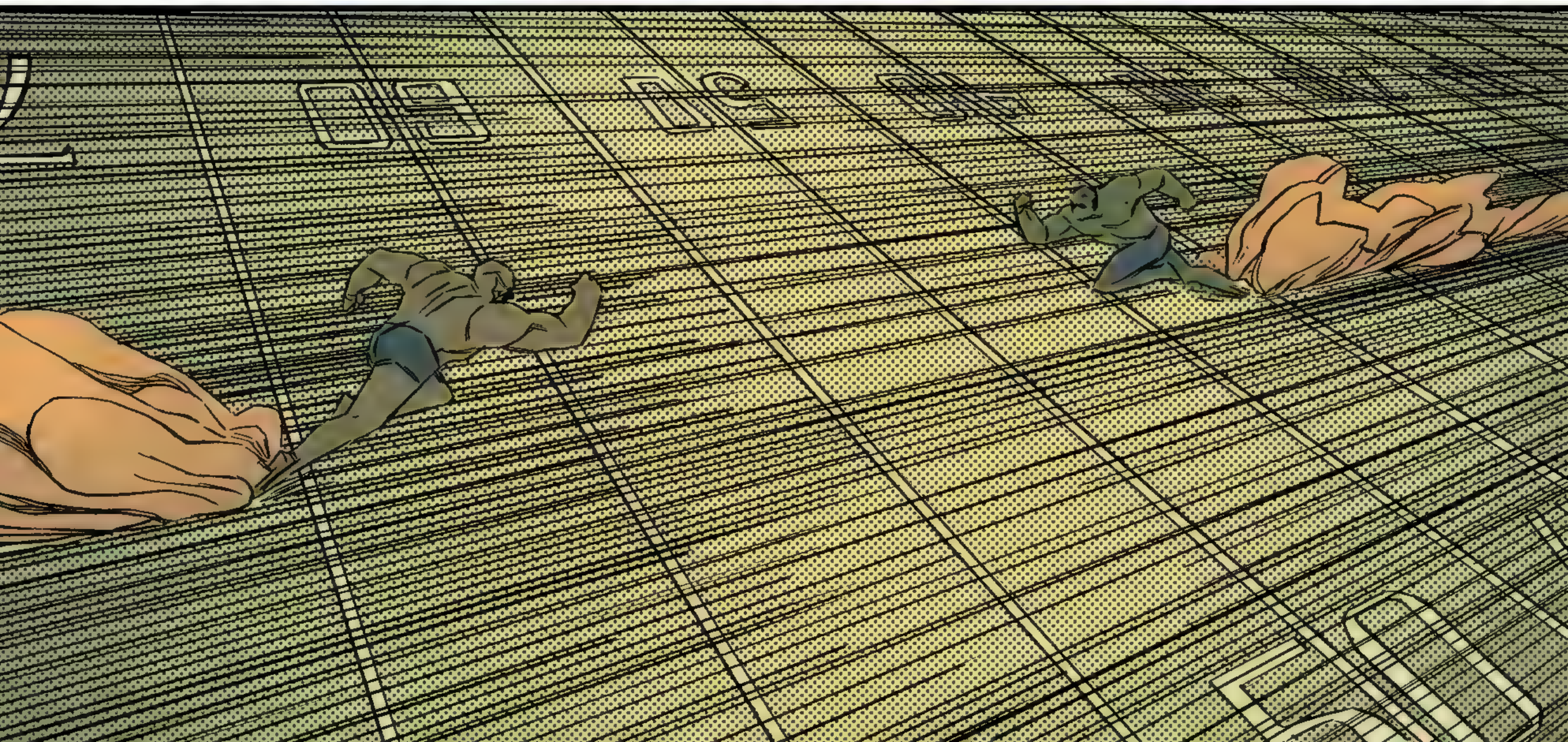
WHAT? NO, I JUST TURNED AN ANKLE.

IT'S *THIS*.

THIS LOOKS *BAD*.



R-RRR LAAGGH



CRRNCH

RRRRRR?

LOOK AT THIS. THIS IS A STARKTECH AUTOMATED MILLING MACHINE. WITH THIS, YOU CAN MACHINE MATERIAL WITH AN ACCURACY DOWN TO THE *MICRON.*

I WROTE A *GRANT* FOR THIS TWO YEARS AGO, BUT I WAS TOLD IT WAS *DENIED.*

MACHINE?

PUNY MACHINE.

WHY IS ALL THIS *HIDDEN* DOWN HERE?

I THINK I'M BEGINNING TO SUSPECT THE ***ANSWER*** TO THAT QUESTION.

THESE NOTES ARE IN DOCTOR JUDE'S HANDWRITING.

YES. AND DO YOU SEE WHAT THE NOTES ARE ***FOR?***

OH, NO. THERE'S NO WAY!

YES. I'M AFRAID SO.

AND THERE ARE OTHER, EVEN MORE *DISTURBING* DEVELOPMENTS.

THAT TINY HARD DRIVE IN YOUR POCKET THAT YOU STORE YOUR MUSIC ON...THAT MAKES PHONE CALLS TOO, RIGHT?

PRIORITY CALL COMING THROUGH FOR S.H.I.E.L.D. TRANSPORT 048, PILOT SPIDER-MAN.

YES, THIS IS SPIDER-MAN.

YES. WHAT?.. WHA..

HUH. WELL, THAT'S THE GAME THEN, ISN'T IT?

THAT'S A SHAME. I WAS REALLY HOPING TO GET A FREE RIDE TO WESTCHESTER OUT OF THIS.

DR. JUDE? ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

OH, YES, MY BOY. I'M POSITIVELY BURSTING WITH ENERGY.

ICEMAN, BLAST THE--

NEXT: EVERYBODY'S DEAD!
(OKAY...NOT EVERYBODY...)